

Filed for intro on 05/16/2001

HOUSE RESOLUTION 102
By Rinks

A RESOLUTION To congratulate the Weakley County School System upon winning the Exemplary School Safety Project award for the Small County category through its successful implementation of the Safe Schools Act of 1998.

WHEREAS, On May 7, 1998 the Safe Schools Act of 1998 was signed into law to provide for grants for local education programs to develop innovative violence prevention programs, conflict resolution, disruptive or assaultive behavior management, improved school security, peer mediation, and training for employees on the identification of possible perpetrators of school-related violence; and

WHEREAS, Such grants were distributed to local education agencies in the same percentage as the LEA's share of BEP funding is to statewide BEP funding, subject to a twenty-five percent match by the LEA and submission by the LEA of a proposed plan of expenditures; and

WHEREAS, the Weakley County School System was the Small County Award winner for its Exemplary School Safety Project developed to implement the School Safety Act of 1998; and

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WHEREAS, Richard Barber, Director of Weakley County Schools, reports that the act has assisted the school system in implementing a comprehensive approach to safety for its students, staff and families; a three-tiered strategy addressing Professional Development, Technical Equipment and Resources and Supplies has been developed to maximize the safety program's effectiveness; and

WHEREAS, Monies allocated toward Professional Development have permitted extensive education of all levels of school personnel, students, parents and community members; that effort has been accomplished by: contracting with Peter Blauvelt, a nationally recognized safety expert, to facilitate a day-long safety inservice training program for educators, civic, business and community leaders; providing support staff with day long inservice training under the direction of "Doc" Reedy, L.C.S.W., which focused on warning signs, de-escalation and conflict resolution techniques and communication strategies; and

WHEREAS, Other initiatives included training to further educate school safety team coordinators on their roles and responsibilities; providing Crisis Prevention Institute training for designated staff who will in turn train school staff across the county; training teams of educators from every elementary school to implement "2nd Step," a violence prevention program; presenting inservice training for a system of guidance counselors on the expanded scope of services provided through their Student Assistance Program, contracted through Baptist Hospital, Union City; and enabling staff to attend the national Student Assistance Conference. 2000, in Nashville; and

WHEREAS, The funds also provided the opportunity for community representatives of the Character Education Committee to attend the Center for Youth Issues Regional Character Education Conference in Chattanooga, provided inservice training to middle school guidance counselors on, and technical assistance for, the start up of the "C.O.M.M.U.N.I.T.Y" mentoring program, which targets 5th and 6th grade students through networking of the local school system, juvenile justice, law enforcement, social services, religious and civic organizations

personnel; and enabling support staff from the Alternative School and members of the Juvenile Officer's staff to attend an Aggression Replacement Conference to be held at the end of May, 2001; and

WHEREAS, The availability of funds for Technical Equipment resulted in the purchase of two-way radios for placement in all schools, in the central office, in the maintenance office and in the transportation office; the resulting direct link to their 911 communications center and to the highway and transportation departments has increased the effectiveness of both the crisis management planning efforts and the execution of county-wide safety drills; and

WHEREAS, The ability to have two-way radio equipment in each bus and driver's education car has already paid off; a school bus on its route, that was cut off by an enraged driver who stopped the bus and demanded entry accompanied by threats, was able to summon assistance and thereby avert a possible assault; and

WHEREAS, Other Technical Equipment funds have been dedicated to improve and establish video surveillance systems at two high schools this year, with the expectation that even greater safety and security will result; and

WHEREAS, Funds directed to the Resources and Supplies segment of the project have provided for the "Respect and Protect" bullying prevention program for core staff; implementation of the Student Assistance Program in conjunction with Baptist Hospital, Union City, which provides assessment, brief therapy and referral services to Weakley County Students; providing technical assistance in the development and implementation of a community-wide mentoring program, with the collaboration of the school system, juvenile justice officials, law enforcement, social services, and religious and civic organizations; and

WHEREAS, Additional funds resulted in the establishment of the Weakley County Character Education Committee, composed of parents, clergy, educators, business, court and law enforcement representatives working to promote the development of positive personal

attributes; numerous print and electronic resources for faculty, staff and students were purchased to utilize in their efforts to foster safe learning environments; and

WHEREAS, Director Richard Barber and the Weakley County School system are justifiably proud of the great strides in school safety made by the judicious use of the funds allocated to them; their well-conceived project made them the winner in the Small County category for Exemplary School Safety Projects; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED SECOND GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, That this legislative body offers its sincere congratulations to the Weakley County School System and its Director, Richard Barber, as well as to all elements of the Weakley County community who participated in collaborative efforts, for their exemplary efforts in implementing the Safe Schools Act of 1998 within their school system and in winning the Small County category for Exemplary School Safety Projects.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.